

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 EB-07 NRC-05 OES-07
FEAE-00 ERDA-05 /109 W
-----091625Z 096291 /43

P R 091451Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8106
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION NATO
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 07957

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, GW
SUBJECT: GERMAN MEDIA REACTION TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S
MEETING WITH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE GERMAN MEDIA HAS TAKEN A POSITIVE
TONE IN REPORTING THE BILATERAL MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENT
CARTER AND CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT IN LONDON, MAY 8. IN
CONTRAST TO PRE-SUMMIT ARTICLES, SOME OF WHICH PREDICTED
A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE U.S. PRESIDENT AND THE GERMAN
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CHANCELLOR, PRESS AND TV COVERAGE STRESS THAT ALTHOUGH NO
SOLUTIONS WERE FOUND FOR SOME OF THE EXISTING BILATERAL
PROBLEMS (E.G., FRG-BRAZIL NUCLEAR AGREEMENT), THE TWO
STATESMEN AGREED ON BASIC ISSUES. IN SUM, THE IMPRESSION
THE GERMAN PUBLIC HAS GOTTEN OF THE MEETING IS THAT THE
PRESIDENT AND THE CHANCELLOR TOOK EACH OTHER'S MEASURE,
WERE IMPRESSED, AND ARE PREPARED TO SEEK COMMON SOLUTIONS

TO GLOBAL PROBLEMS. END SUMMARY.

1. BEFORE THE MEETING OF CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT AND PRESIDENT CARTER ON MAY 7 SOME QUARTERS IN THE GERMAN MEDIA WERE PREDICTING AN ALL OUT GERMAN-AMERICAN CONFRONTATION. THE FOCUS OF MOST MEDIA COVERAGE WAS ON THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS AND FEW JOURNALISTS DISCUSSED THE HEALTHY FOUNDATION OF GERMAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS. IN CONTRAST, POST-MEETING REPORTING HAS BEEN VERY UP-BEAT AND AS THE "SEUDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG" PUT IT: ALTHOUGH THE TWO WORLD LEADERS HAVE NOT YET BECOME FRIENDS, THEY ARE NO LONGER OPPONENTS.

2. CONSIDERABLE COVERAGE IN THE PRESS HAS FOCUSED ON ATMOSPHERICS AND THE FACT THAT ALL SIDES DESCRIBED THE MEETING AS FRIENDLY AND OPEN. BEFORE THE LONDON SUMMIT THE MEDIA NOT ONLY CONCENTRATED ON RECENT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS ON POLICY ISSUES BUT PLAYED UP WHAT THEY CLAIMED WERE POOR PERSONAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CHANCELLOR AND THE PRESIDENT. NOW THEY REPORT THAT CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT AND PRESIDENT CARTER WERE COMFORTABLE WITH EACH OTHER AT THE MEETING AND THAT BOTH STATESMEN CAME AWAY IMPRESSED FROM THEIR FIRST FACE-TO-FACE ENCOUNTER SINCE THE PRESIDENT TOOK OFFICE.

3. ALL THE COMMENTATORS HERE RECOGNIZE THAT ONE MEETING WOULD NOT SOLVE SUCH THORNY PROBLEMS AS NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION, BUT THE POSITIVE TONE OF THE LONDON BILATERAL HAS CAUSED MANY OF THEM TO REFOCUS THEIR ATTENTION ON THE

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BIGGER AND MORE IMPORTANT ISSUE OF THE CENTRAL NEED FOR GOOD GERMAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS WITHIN THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE. GERMAN OFFICIALS WERE BUSY BEFORE THE MEETING PUTTING OUT THE LINE THAT THEY EXPECTED IT TO GO WELL.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 07957

THEY HAVE EVERY REASON TO BE SATISFIED WITH THE WAY THE MEDIA HAVE HANDLED THE MEETING SO FAR, AND THAT THE IMPRESSION THE GERMAN PUBLIC HAS OF THE MEETING IS POSITIVE.

4. RECENT DOMESTIC POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC HAVE NOT BEEN VERY KIND TO HELMUT SCHMIDT. THE LONDON MEETING, PORTRAYED IN THE GERMAN CONFIDENTIAL

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MEDIA AS A SUCCESS, IS LIKELY TO GIVE HIS POLITICAL STOCK A BOOST AT HOME. ONE OF THE LEADING OPPOSITION POLITICIANS, KURT BIEDENKOPF, CONFIRMED THIS VIEW AND TOLD US THAT THE SUMMIT WAS A PLUS FOR GERMAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS AND FOR THE SCHMIDT-GENSCHER GOVERNMENT. BIEDENKOPF TOOK ISSUE WITH A RECENT STATEMENT BY CDU/CSU OPPOSITION CHAIRMAN KOHL THAT THE WEST GERMAN GOVERNMENT HAD LOST CONTROL OVER FOREIGN POLICY. RATHER, BIEDENKOPF SAID, SCHMIDT'S HANDLING OF HIS MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT WILL STRENGTHEN THE CHANCELLOR'S HAND IN DEALING WITH THE OPPOSITION AND IT MADE NO SENSE FOR THE OPPOSITION TO TRY AND MAKE CAPITAL OUT OF US-WEST GERMAN

DIFFERENCES.

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